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SEEMING ODDITIES IN NATURE.

SECOND ARTICLE.

In a former paper we pointed out that in the profusion of animated nature, there were tribes of animals of a half-and-half character, neither exactly birds nor beasts, but part of both, without mixture or monstrosity. That, as explained, is one of the means which nature adopts seemingly to economise the work of creation, and is most effectual. There are many examples of this system of economising, if we may call it so.

Take as a remarkable instance the transformations of certain insects. An animal is wanted for the special purpose of destroying carrion, so as to prevent it becoming a nuisance. The creature appropriate for this purpose is a small worm, known as a maggot. But how are such worms to be extemporised, when a mass of putrid meat is to be disposed of? The difficulty is beautifully got over by sending a particular kind of big fly called a blue-bottle that is entitled to rank as a scavenger-general. Instinctively, the blue-bottle discovers where its services are required. There it deposits eggs; the eggs very speedily become maggots, and the maggots make short work of eating up every scrap of the putrid mass. When that is done, they cannot fly away. This, however, is provided for. They undergo a transformation into flies, and they set off in a flight for new substances requiring their attention. This is but a brief explanation of the process of transformation, which is various according to circumstances. It is sufficient to impress us with the fact that the creature referred to is in a sense two distinct animals. It has a flying life and a crawling life; or more correctly, while in its flying state, it can originate a host of crawling creatures admirably adapted for the design in view.

In pursuing its professional avocations, the blue-bottle is far from being particular. It will as readily attack a joint of meat as a dead horse. Cooks, of course, have a detestation of blue-bottles, which they think are created only

to torment them, and they would be glad to hear that they were exterminated off the face of the earth. This is being a little unreasonable. Blue-bottles have a right to live, if they can. No doubt, they make themselves very troublesome when by accident they find their way into a room, and keep buzzing on the window-panes. On these occasions they are to be pitied. They are trying to get out, with the view of performing their proper functions, and they should be let out accordingly. If they wish to go about their business, why not let them go by all means, and be thankful for the riddance. In short, though apt to be an annoyance, blue-bottles are sent for a good purpose. They have their appointed uses in creation, and for these uses, their structure, while not displeasing to the eye, is admirably adapted. Look at their alacrity, their swiftness on the wing. Bees are very properly applauded for their industry. But we doubt if they are a whit more industrious than blue-bottles, for they are ever actively roaming about to 'improve each shining hour,' on their own proper mission, which is to remove what is unwholesome and unsightly. The merits of blue-bottles have been a little overlooked in literature. Heraldry has strangely neglected them. Should the fraternity of scavengers think of getting up a coat of arms, they might with great propriety adopt the blue-bottle as a crest. We know that cooks will never be reconciled to blue-bottles. All they have to do is to keep joints out of their reach.

Leaving insect transformations, about which many amusing volumes have been written, one or two other transformations are quite as remarkable. In the first place is that shewn in certain amphibious reptiles. Here, the object in view is to produce an animal which can live in or out of water, according to the period of its existence. Toads and frogs, as is well known, begin active life as tadpoles, which are seen swimming in ponds and ditches. The tadpole is a kind of fish; it breathes by means of gills. When the time comes for dropping its fish character, its tail, which had been the means of propulsion, drops off, its four

legs make their appearance, its gills are absorbed, and it begins to breathe by means of lungs. This is surely a very interesting metamorphosis. Just as blue-bottles have their assigned purpose in creation, so have toads and frogs. It is to clear the fields and gardens of beetles, moths, and other insects, also worms that are apt to be troublesome. Why there should be such a dislike, almost a horror of toads and frogs, is not easily explained. To man they are harmless, besides being useful creatures. A correspondent who possesses an affection for these animals, gives the following experiences.

'I never went so far as to tame toads and frogs, but I used to watch them with some interest. One specimen used to live in an old hollow tree-root which formed part of some rock-work. On the way up from his haunt to the open air, which he visited about dusk for the purpose of feeding, was a small hole in this root, through which he occasionally poked his head when on his way out. It seemed to be a sort of observatory window, from which he noted the weather, and by which he sat to philosophise. When he reached the open air, he would sit bolt upright and wait patiently. Now is the interesting time to watch him; but there is difficulty in doing this, as it is nearly dark. Creep up very slowly and quietly. Toadie is very trustful and unsuspicious, and you may steal your head within half a yard of him, then wait quietly. A moth flutters by, or a beetle creeps up. He gets within a distance of about two or three inches, and you hear a snap; the insect has vanished, and the toad gives a self-satisfied hitch and a gulp. If the moth is very big, you will see the ends of its wings sticking out of his mouth, so you know where the moth is. But how did it get there? The toad has a very long tongue, which is fastened down close to the lips, and stretches towards the back of the mouth. When an insect passes, the tongue is darted out, extended; and the slimy tip catches and drags in the poor insect in less time than I can tell this. The action is so instantaneous that the eye cannot follow it.

'My sisters and brothers set up a colony of tame frogs and toads in a greenhouse at home; and very interesting and intelligent the poor things proved to be. One very large frog would answer to his name Jack, and come tumbling out for worms. He croaked with delight when a friend scratched his back. He knew and avoided strangers; and feared very much an inquisitive terrier which sniffed suspiciously at his mistress's new pets. The toads were almost as tame; and all united in giving reliable weather indications. In dry weather they were all stowed away out of sight. If it was damp or wet, they were easily to be seen, retiring only to the shelter of an upturned box, and nestling in shallow holes they worked in the soil. One way of winning Jack's favour—I think his mistress gained his favour in this way—was to give him a liberal share of the water used for the plants. Another pet was a three-legged toad, the fourth leg having probably been taken off by a careless gardener. The hurt was new when he was taken in; but he soon recovered, and was quite happy in this species of hospital; he only stumbled along as lame pensioners usually do, and was quiet and grateful.'

The friend who sends us these remarks does not in his love of frogs foresee that when these animals become a superfluity they require to be kept down. If you happen to have a pond to which frogs resort for spawning, the likelihood is that in a single season, if no repressive measures are adopted, you will have the whole neighbourhood full of frogs. They will be seen sitting complacently in every pathway and looking about them. This may be called the plague of frogs. Too much of a good thing. It is our belief that if let alone, frogs and rabbits would soon cover the habitable globe. A human being would scarcely have standing-room, or anything left to eat. In cases of this sort, man with his superior intelligence and responsibilities needs to take restrictive measures in hand. If you will have a pond and its colony of frogs, you must keep ducks, who not being oppressed with a sense of delicacy or humanity, will gobble up every young frog within reach of their bills, and so, like a detachment of policemen, keep things in order. Snakes would do as well as ducks, but some might think that the cure was worse than the disease. A few years ago, when we were at Wiesbaden, the plague of frogs was awful, and it would have been far worse, not endurable, but for officials constantly dragging the pond behind the Kursaal for tadpoles, and carrying them away in barrowfuls. Considerations of this kind must temper notions of cruelty to animals. With every respect for frogs, and likewise for blue-bottles, as being useful in the scavenging line, we admit that both classes of animals may be overdone, and that active measures of limitation may reasonably be resorted to.

Before dismissing tadpoles, it is proper to say that their change to the frog condition depends on the sun's light. If kept in the dark, they will till their dying day remain tadpoles. They will grow larger, but never become frogs. Could we say anything more emphatic of the advantages of sunlight as concerns health and development? What cruelties are committed in keeping horses and other domestic animals in whole or semi-darkness! It is not allowing fair-play to nature. Every living creature, human beings included, ought to have a thorough allowance of daylight. Stunted in this respect, they grow up in an imperfect tadpole condition.

While toads, frogs, and newts left to the operations of nature, dismiss their gills in early life, some others of the amphibia retain their gills on growing up, and according to pleasure, breathe either through these organs or by their lungs. This must be considered a great convenience. Tired of one way of breathing, they can try another. The best example we can offer of an animal so highly favoured is that of the axolotl, a fine specimen of which, about a foot in length, we had an opportunity of seeing in the Aquarium at Brighton. An esteemed and travelled correspondent gave in these pages, August 1875, a good account of the axolotl, and we are not going to repeat the description. All that need now be done is to revive recollections, adding such fresh information as has appeared. The axolotl is a lizard-like animal with four feet. It is an inhabitant of a shallow salt lake in Mexico, in which it walks along the bottom, using its gills for breathing. When disposed to take the air, it goes off on an excursion on dry ground, making use of its lungs, and trying to catch worms for

food. There is something more curious than this. Twelve years ago, the fact was mentioned in the French Academy of Sciences that thirty axolotls had taken permanently to the land, cast their gills, and assumed the character of American land-newts. A lady, *Fraülein Marie von Chauvin*, as we understand, has actually succeeded in making the axolotl a land-animal. The account of the transformation is given as follows by Dr Andrew Wilson, in his instructive volume, 'Leisure-Time Studies.'

'*Fraülein von Chauvin*, by dint of care and patience, succeeded in enticing five specimens from their native waters by gradually inuring them to a terrestrial existence. The animals were highly refractory as far as their feeding was concerned; but their objections to diet when under experimentation were overcome by the ingenious method of thrusting a live worm into the mouth; whilst by pinching the tail of the worm, it was made to wriggle so far down the amphibian's throat, that the animal was compelled to swallow the morsel. Of the five subjects on which the patience of *Fraülein von Chauvin* was exercised, three died, after a life of nearly fifty days on land. At the period of their death, however, their gills and tail-fins were much reduced as compared with the normal state of these organs. The two surviving axolotls, however, behaved in the most satisfactory manner. Gills and tail-fins grew "small by degrees and beautifully less," and apparently by an actual process of drying and shrivelling through contact with the outer air, as opposed to any internal or absorptive action. The animals moulted or shed their skins several times; and finally, as time passed, the gills and tail-fin wholly disappeared; the gill-openings became closed; the flattened tail of the axolotls was replaced by a rounded appendage; the eyes became large; and ultimately, with the development of a beautiful brownish-black hue and gloss on the skin, varied with yellow spots on the under parts, the axolotls assumed the garb and guise of the land-amblystomas or land-newt. It was thus clearly proved that a change of surroundings—represented by the removal of the axolotls from the water, and by their being gradually inured to a terrestrial existence—has the effect of metamorphosing them into not merely a new species, but apparently an entirely different genus of animals.'

In this account there is something very suggestive. Under an overpowering creative law, animals assume a character according, less or more, to external conditions. For anything that is known, the axolotl may have hitherto been an imperfectly developed land animal, still somehow struggling with its rudimentary tadpolism. We should like much to hear how the respected *Fraülein von Chauvin* succeeded with her axolotls, and if they shewed no disposition to go back to gills. Naturalists in all parts of the world cannot fail to be interested in so extraordinary a transformation. Could a change of character be effected in any other animal that dabbles in the water and recreates itself on dry land? Take the case of the *Ornithorhynchus*, a native of New South Wales, with the body of a water-rat, the bill of a duck, and web-feet. In swimming about, the bill answers the purpose of an anger, to bore holes in the muddy banks of rivers in search of its food, and so far it

excels the ordinary water-rat. Round the inner end of the bill of this strange creature, there is a projecting rim or flange, which keeps the fur of the head clean during the process of boring—a fine instance of a useful provision of nature.

Suppose that some enthusiast like *Fraülein von Chauvin* were to gather a few specimens of this half-duck and half-rat, and keep them entirely aloof from water, would the bills gradually drop off, and regularly constituted mouths make their appearance? We venture the question for what it is worth. Naturalists apparently have yet a great deal to learn by practical experiments in changing the conditions which to so large a degree have influenced the character of animals.

Obviously, the primary conditions of animal existence are sunlight, air, temperature, and moisture. On the apportionment of these the character and forms of animals are regulated. Where an animal has to live in the dark, it does not need eyes; its eyes therefore disappear, while some other sense, as a compensation, is quickened. The creature becomes tadpolitic. This is observable in the case of certain fishes that are found in the underground river which flows through the caves of Kentucky, and in similar situations. Their eyes are gone, leaving only a speck on the skin where they once were. These eyeless fish, which were described in our pages three years ago, afford a striking example of the power which conditions exert over faculties and organs. Though these poor fish cannot see, they possess extraordinary acuteness in hearing, and are able to pursue and overcome fish provided with eyes. There is another curiosity in their structure. As their prey swim near the surface of the water, their mouth is towards the crown of the head, an arrangement which saves them a great deal of trouble. There have been numerous speculations on the history of these fish. Were they created without eyes, in adaptation to dark underground rivers, or have the eyes disappeared in the course of ages to suit new conditions? Would the eyes return if they were placed in sun-lit waters? These are vastly interesting questions, which nobody can answer. A consideration of them fills us with perplexity and amazement. W. C.

YOUNG LORD PENRITH.

CHAPTER XX.—ON THE BEACH.

To walk on the beach is a simple sea-side recreation, which in different localities means something very various. At Brighton or Scarborough, such a stroll may be diversified and enlivened by the crack of whips and roll of wheels over sand or shingle, the music of organ-boys and grotesque Ethiopians, and the solicitations of mercenary boatmen to have a 'splendid sail,' or to woo sea-sickness in a more seductive form by the intellectual pursuit of whiting-fishing. Elsewhere, a dabbler in the ologies may fill books with weed, or store a can with crabs and molluscs for future transfer to the aquarium or the object-glass of the microscope. But, at Treport, the solitary strip of beach, if sought at all, had to be chosen out for its own sake.

Maud Stanhope was walking on the beach alone. There was little or no risk in being thus

unprotected, for in Cornwall, as in America, a lady who is quite alone is as safe from molestation as Una attended by her lion. And in case of the appearance of greedy snatchers from afar, such as Ghost Nan, or of tramps ready to exchange the beggar's whine for the growl of intimidation, any of the black-bearded giants engaged in tinkering up leaky boats or mending nets on the bank above would have been prompt to hurry to the rescue. So Maud had the gleaming cliffs, and the strip of shingle, and the jutting rocks all to herself, as she walked within a stone's throw of the slumbering sea.

Presently the shingle crackled beneath a man's heavier tread, and Maud, who had been walking deep in thought, lifted her eyes and saw Hugh Ashton standing before her. He raised his cap of course, and she returned his bow, saying: 'I was surprised to see you, Captain Ashton. I thought you had been still in London.' For Hugh's gallant conduct on the night of the wreck was matter of habitual discussion at Llosthuel Court, as under less pretentious roof-trees, and Maud was perfectly well aware of the finding of the purple bag, and that Hugh had undertaken a journey to London to restore the documents it had contained to their proprietor, Mr Dicker.

'I did not stay long, Miss Stanhope,' answered Hugh. 'I merely went, as you have perhaps heard, to give back some papers, which it was my good luck to save, to their owner—nothing more.'

He saw that she had been weeping, that the traces of tears were still visible about her beautiful eyes; but he did not dare to ask a question that might have been deemed impertinent, still less to offer consolation. And the knowledge of this imparted somewhat of awkwardness to his manner, which Maud had never noticed before. She did not like him the worse for it, however, partly divining the cause, and with a woman's ready tact, began to speak of indifferent subjects—of the shining sea, so calm and peaceful; the varying tints of the cliff-wall towering so majestically above the narrow strip of pebbly strand; and the contrast between Ocean dressed in smiles and the furious sea of that tempestuous night on which Hugh Ashton had last taken out the *Western Maid* to do her errand of mercy.

'I have not seen you, Captain Ashton, since that night,' said Maud presently; 'but you will believe me when I tell you how, when the news of your going out to the aid of that unfortunate ship reached Llosthuel, and we heard the terrible wind, and the awful sound of the angry sea—awful even there—we quite trembled for you and for the brave men who went with you, to help.'

Again the shingle crackled, but this time under the heels of a dainty pair of varnished boots, for it was Sir Lucius Larpent who, turning the angle of a rock, suddenly entered on the scene. He had an angry spot of red on each cheekbone, such as irritation calls up in some men, and there was anger in his eyes too.

'Mr Ashton again, hey?' he said peevishly, and favouring Hugh with a look of the coolest insolence.—'Upon my soul, cousin, I am made to feel myself almost an intruder when, in the course of my rambles, I stumble upon you in company with— Good-morning to you, Mr Ashton. I did not expect to see you here. You appear to have

plenty of time on your hands; quite the gentleman at large.'

'I have time on my hands, it so happens, just now, my vessel being under repairs,' answered Hugh quietly.

'Oh, don't take the trouble to excuse yourself to me. It is my mother whose underling you are, not mine!' said the baronet coarsely.

'Lucius!' exclaimed Maud; and the reproach in her voice seemed to exasperate her kinsman, who said, more snappishly than before: 'I must request you, Maud, to be good enough to accept my escort home to the Court. It is not seemly that you should be out walking so near my mother's house with this—Mr Ashton.'

'I was not walking with him!' exclaimed Maud, in indignant astonishment. 'I met him, as I met you just now, by the merest accident, and stopped to say one word, that is all. Your language is unjust, Lucius!'

'Accident indeed!' muttered the baronet. 'There are accidents, cousin, of very frequent occurrence, it appears, and which a little friendly interference ought to prevent. I must ask of you to let me bear you company so far as Llosthuel; indeed I must. My presence may be unwelcome, but it may be serviceable in putting an end to—accidents which repeat themselves so often.' This was a very rude speech, and one which Miss Stanhope, had she been quite calm and collected, would have perceived that Sir Lucius had not the slightest right to make. He was her cousin, not her uncle or her guardian, and even to a male cousin a young lady surely owes, by the very strictest canons of Mrs Grundy's unwritten law, no sort of obedience. But she was unaccountably agitated by the baronet's artful insinuation—it did not amount to a direct charge—that she had visited the beach for the purpose of meeting Hugh, and she forgot to resent this usurpation of authority on the part of her kinsman.

Hugh did what, perhaps, was the very wisest thing he could have done under the circumstances of the case. The hot blood rose mantling in his cheeks, and his lip quivered; but he kept the rising anger down, and bore the baronet's almost open insults with Spartan patience. There was evidently nothing which would better have suited Sir Lucius than a quarrel, which Maud Stanhope's presence must of necessity confine within the limits of a verbal encounter, between the young captain of the *Western Maid* and himself. Such an altercation must result in closing the doors of Llosthuel Court against the promoted fisherman, and might bring about the total withdrawal of Lady Larpent's favour from her former protégé. As it was, Hugh Ashton silently raised his cap, made a low salutation to Miss Stanhope, and walked away. 'I never was so sorely tried before,' he murmured to himself, as he scaled the bank, and gained the coast-road that led into the town, 'never so sorely tempted, as when yonder coxcomb made me the butt of his ill-humour. And to remember that one word from me!'

He said no more; but a deeper shade came over his brow, and he went upon his way without further soliloquy. Meanwhile Maud Stanhope, escorted by Sir Lucius, was slowly walking back towards Llosthuel, and the baronet was doing his best to improve the opportunity of pressing his suit upon his beautiful kinswoman. It might

seem at first sight a difficult and awkward task, that of passing from the character of the reproving relative to that of the enamoured admirer; but Sir Lucius, whose effrontery was equal to the assumption of almost any part, neither felt nor exhibited the slightest embarrassment at the abruptness of the transition.

'It is because I love you so, dearest Maud,' he said with an easy assurance which gave him almost an air of sincerity, 'that it maddens me to think that you could stoop, out of pure thoughtlessness, I am sure, to encourage the impertinent advances of such a fellow as that—not fit to black my boots, by Jove—and'

'Stop, Lucius, or you will say what you will be sorry for afterwards, and which I can never forgive!' said Maud, interrupting her cousin in a voice that trembled indeed, but not with fear. The insulting imputation which her kinsman had let fall had stung her to the quick; and Sir Lucius, who felt that he had made a mistake, was prompt in rectifying it. 'I beg pardon,' he said, with well-acted humility, 'beg your pardon, Maud, with all my heart, I am sure. Yes, I forgot myself. I was rude to you unwittingly, in my very anxiety to shield you from— But I cannot trust myself to speak of that fisher-fellow. The very thought of his vulgar presumption makes my blood boil!'

'Sir Lucius,' said Maud coldly, 'you are very much in error, or much misinformed, respecting the absent person of whom it pleases you to use such bitter words. He has been guilty of neither vulgarity nor presumption. I believe him to be incapable of both. Humble as his station may be, I never saw a truer gentleman.'

'After that!' exclaimed Sir Lucius, with a burst of laughter that sounded actually good-humoured—'after that, Maud, the less I say of this amphibious Paladin the better! But come, cousin; do not let us quarrel. If I hurt your feelings, I am sincerely sorry for it. It was only my love for yourself that caused me to lose my temper—not a very good one at any time, I am afraid.'

'If it were only that, Lucius!' said Maud more softly. Women do not always dislike a confession of trifling faults from a man's lips; and will condone much more than we really deserve!

'Well, it is only that,' replied Sir Lucius. 'I am a hot-tempered man by nature, and I have much to worry and vex me. And, Maud dear, there is something anomalous in my position, which would try the patience of a better-tempered man. I am a baronet. I'm sure I wish I wasn't one, and that my father had been content to remain the Honourable Wilfred Beville, and leave me to be simply Lucius Beville. But he took my mother's name and arms—what on earth were the Larpent arms!—and would have a title for both. It costs me dear. Every fellow who would be happy with a shilling wants half-a-crown from me, because I have that ridiculous handle to my name. You might pity me, Maud.'

'I do pity you, Lucius; from my heart I do,' said Maud Stanhope in her sweet gentle way. She had just been afforded a glimpse of her kinsman's inner nature, and although she was sorry for him, it was as we are sorry for a fly that falls into the milk-jug. He was her cousin, and as a child, she had clung to the bold boy's hand when games of

snapdragon and so forth were going on; but between her and Sir Lucius there could be no real sympathy. The very hereditary rank which he bemoaned as an injury and an encumbrance, she knew to be dear to him as the apple of his eye. A cheque would make all the difference to him between exultation and despondency. And, knowing this, she could not pity Sir Lucius otherwise than as we extend our compassion to creatures below ourselves in the world's great scale of precedence.

'Will you not do more than pity me? Will you love me, will you marry me, Maud?' said or sighed the baronet as they reached the gravelled carriage-ring, the sun-dial, and the porch of Llos-thuel Court.

'Never, Lucius!' answered Miss Stanhope firmly. 'The sooner this subject ceases to be mooted between us, the better for both.'

There must have been some manliness about Sir Lucius Larpent. Sullenly, but with courteous politeness, he took off his hat, and without a word left her. Maud gave one glance as he turned away, and then passed sadly on into the house.

CHAPTER XXI.—THE BLACK MILLER.

Far inland, and some eighteen miles as the crow flies from Treport and its bay and harbour, lies a region little visited by tourists, to whom indeed it presents scanty attractions, being a lofty and stony tableland, thinly peopled, with no romantic scenery, and, owing to its bleak situation and considerable elevation above the sea, having a climate far colder than that of the extreme south-western coast, beloved of the myrtle and the scarlet-blossomed oleander. That sterile district could never have been, from an agricultural stand-point, very prosperous; yet it was once the centre of an industry over which our Plantagenet, and still more our Tudor kings watched with jealous care, and which had drawn Phœnician barks across the mysterious sea that girdled misty Britain in the gray dawn of history. All around Pen Mawth and its circumjacent moorlands the ground was honeycombed with shafts, adits, and galleries of abandoned mines, opened at all sorts of dates, from the time when Gaul was free and Rome a village of mud-huts, down to the speculative epoch that succeeded the Peace of 1814.

All was over now. The mines, in the working of which it was said generations of adventurers, lured by the hopes of gain, had spent far more than ever the niggard earth had yielded in return, were closed at last. Wheal Betty and Wheal Fortunatus and Wheal Prosperous, famous in their day for the tin they gave and the copper they promised, had long since been hateful to the ears of London brokers, and could not have been nursed into popularity again by the most fluent of promoters. The pick and shovel had long since ceased to tinkle among gossam and schorl, schist and mica; or the human ants to swarm forth at dusk from those narrow holes that gave access to the upper galleries that tunnelled the hillside. Emigration had swept off the people, and there were left now but barely the hands that were needed to wrest subsistence from the barren soil.

In the heart of this uninviting tract of country stands its one considerable hill, which in Ireland

would take rank as a mountain, and the exact height of which is duly set down in the county hand-books and Engineers' Survey, Pen Mawth. The spelling, so antiquarian purists declare, should be Pen Mauth, and means, in the ancient Cornish tongue, the Hill of Death. There can be no doubt as to the accuracy of the translation, at anyrate, since the Norman barons who reared their own castle, the ruined towers of which still stand at the foot of the eminence, called their fortress and themselves by the name of Montmort. The Montmort family has been extinct long since, the Montmort keep is a nesting-place for owl and jackdaw, and the acres of the fief have been sold and resold, and parcelled out, as often happens in Cornwall, among a score or two of yeomen. But still the Hill of Death, brown with heather, gray with rocks, rises as old, uncouth in shape, a sullen tarn of peat-stained water near its summit, a noisy brook descending the narrow glen that scores its stony flank the deepest; and in that glen lies, half-hidden by beetling crags that threaten to fall and crush it, the Mawth Mill, solidly built of yore by the feudal barons of Montmort, and which has survived the castle of which it formed an adjunct.

Mill and Miller were well matched. The Mill of Death had borne but a bad name in that countryside ever since those early days when Justice was hard to find, and far to seek, along miry roads and past flooded fords, and the hard heart and the heavy hand had practically more to do with settling matters of everyday life than had the judges of Our Lord the King who came to hold assize in Exeter. There were stories yet current around cottage hearths of cruel vengeance exercised against vassals who had refused to have their corn ground at the lord's mill, or who had boggled at the toll levied by the lord's miller. And the present occupant of the mill—although he had no unscrupulous archers or roistering men-at-arms to back him in wrong-doing, as when the black and silver banner of Montmort waved, threatening, over the battlements of the now dilapidated castle—was yet the terror of the neighbourhood for miles around.

Ralph Swart—such was the name by which it pleased him to be called—was no Cornishman born, though long a dweller in the district. He had taken the mill on lease from the London Hospital—hospitals grant leases on easy terms—to which it had come to belong, had repaired it, and put it in working order. People called him the Black Miller, most likely on account of his complexion, which was strangely dark; perhaps also on account of the gloomy aspect of the old masonry and timber darkened by age until the oak resembled ebony, of which his mill was constructed.

Well known at every market for miles around was the Black Miller. Keen and hard at a bargain, never seeming to lack the ready cash wherewith to seal and clench it, he bought grain, when a profit could be made by buying it, to a much larger extent than the mere needs of his mill demanded. And, curiously enough, though the man was regarded with fear and aversion, more grist came to his grindstones in the legitimate way of business, than to those of pleasant-spoken competitors who had a merry look and a kind word for all customers. 'Mustn't anger Master

Swart!' was said in many a homestead, when it was a question of what should be done with the good wheat in the granary; and it might have been thought that some shadow of the feudal privilege departed yet clung to the Black Miller and his ill-omened abode, so faithful was the patronage of those who dealt with him.

It has been mentioned that Ralph Swart was the terror of the neighbourhood. He was well qualified to keep up such a character. Fierce and forbidding of aspect, morose and churlish in manners, his herculean strength and savage temper made him doubly formidable. There had been those who disputed his right, tacitly acknowledged by most, to have the lion's share in every bargain, and they had generally had the worst of it in law proceedings, and always in a personal encounter. But very few, after a second glance at the mould in which the Black Miller was cast, would have cared to measure themselves against him.

Ralph Swart lived all alone. A farming-man from the village came up daily to tend his horse and small garden, and to do such rough housekeeping tasks as the Black Miller required and permitted. When evening came, this man was carefully locked and bolted out of the house, and trudged home, nothing loath, to his own cottage at some distance. No wages would have tempted any native of the hamlet to sleep beneath the roof of the Black Miller. It was not only that the master of the house was an object of fear and dislike, but that the house itself was reputed to be haunted. A pale face, it was said, was seen on moonlight nights peering from the upper windows, all cobwebbed and begrimed with dust—a woman's face, the gossips said below their breath. Yet no woman dwelt there. The Black Miller's wife slept sound, poor thing, in Tregunnow Churchyard. She had died, years and years ago, of a broken heart—so rumour told. Ralph Swart had had a daughter; but he had driven her forth from his doors when she was sixteen; and where the poor scared child had wandered to, or whether she were alive or dead, none knew. See him as he comes now, slowly riding, with a slack rein and a thoughtful brow, up the rocky road that leads to his mill. At a glance it can be seen that the alarm which he inspires, and in which he takes a perverse pride, is well warranted. He is not tall, certainly, but rather resembles a giant cut short; yet, if only of middle height, the vast breadth of chest and the great strength of the limbs render him more than a match for any chance customer. He rides ungracefully, as he does everything, indeed, but so firmly that the most vicious horse cannot unseat him. The lean, well-bred, ill-groomed steed he rides *is* vicious, and was bought cheaply at the Tregunnow fair on that account. A vicious horse is apt to have sound legs and a game spirit, and to be sold at a low price, and the Black Miller has a preference for vicious horses. As the man rides on, defiant even now that there is none to look at him, now that he is climbing the steep path which leads up his own ghostly ravine, towards his own melancholy home, it must be owned that there is a rugged grandeur about him, as there is about the shaggy red-eyed bison and the grisly bear. Ugly enough he is; but that high forehead ought to have brains behind it, as surely as that tremendous jaw bespeaks tenacity of pur-

pose. The swarthy skin is darker and more sallow than that of a Spaniard or Neapolitan, and the eyes, though small, are as piercing as those of a bird of prey. The man is close shaven. You see the blue stubbly mark of his steel-hard beard quite distinctly, just as you see his iron-gray hair, that age cannot as yet turn to silver. He is not slovenly, in farmer fashion, as to his clothes, and wears high black boots, that reach the knee, and spurs which have no sinecure, as his horse's bleeding sides attest. Slowly he rides on, deep in thought, a bold bad man, unless Lavater's science and the voice of fame be alike untrue, but one shrewd enough to avoid certain unpleasant contingencies, and to keep to windward of the law.

Ralph Swart, thus riding homeward, his wiry horse picking its way well among the loose stones and shale that strewn the ill-kept road, would have presented, had any one with competent intelligence been there to watch him, a curious social puzzle. He was rough in word and deed, repulsive to look upon, hateful in every relation of life; yet it was impossible not to recognise a certain power and originality about the man. The very fact that he was neat as to his clothes and person, leading the queer life he did, like a volunteer Robinson Crusoe, spoke well for his strength of purpose. To lapse into squalor and eccentric negligence of costume is for the solitary so easy a descent into Avernus, that the recluse who conforms outwardly to the fashions of the world shews some merit *per se*. And the few educated persons who had conversed with the Black Miller were compelled to own that Mr Swart was something more than the mere sharp-witted rustic that he appeared. The indefinable freemasonry which exists among the cultured aroused in the minds of parson and doctor a suspicion that the Black Miller had more booklore than falls to the lot of those who live by the hopper and the mill-wheel.

As he jogged on, Ralph Swart drew from an inner pocket of his coat three or four old letters, tied together with string, and all of which, save one, bore postmarks that did not indicate any place in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. He drew forth first one and then another of these epistles, stained and tattered with frequent handling, and glanced them over, quickly but not hastily, and then replaced them within the belt of string. Then he put up the packet again, saying to himself in a harsh grating voice: 'Ay, ay! that would be about his age now; and like his father—yes! I'd pick him out then, among a thousand; and if what they said of him out there be true'—He paused a little, as if in doubt, and then drawing from another pocket a hunting-flask, unscrewed the top, and swallowed a draught of the fiery spirit which it contained. Then he replaced the flask in his pocket. 'Ho, ho! let him try,' he exclaimed boastfully. 'Old Ralph Swart—Ralph Swart—ha, ha!—is a tough nut for a stripling to crack. Let him try, if he can. I was fool enough, for a day, to be scared when first that gipsy hag told me that he was so near—it did seem as if Providence—But enough of that. Ho, ho! let him try.'

He rode on in silence now, and dismounting at his own door, relieved his troubled mind in hearty curses on his serving-man, who was used to his moods, and cared little when strong measures did

not follow the strong language; and then leaving his tired horse to be led to the shed that did duty for a stable, and receiving the comfortable assurance that the place was 'redded up' and the pork and greens boiling for his dinner, walked heavily into the cheerless dwelling-place, and closed the door behind him with a bang.

FRUIT-FARMING AND THE FRUIT-TRADE.

THE chief fruit-growing counties of England are Hereford, Devon, Somerset, Worcester, and Gloucester, shires, which take up in orchards, mostly planted on grass-lands, over ninety-seven thousand acres of ground. About twenty-one thousand acres are also devoted to fruit-growing in Kent, Cornwall, Surrey, and Lancashire, on what may be called the market-garden system; and there are over nine thousand acres of the whole laid out in apple and pear orchards. Fruit-farming is largely on the increase both in England and Scotland, the novelty of strawberry-farming on an extensive scale having been going on for some time in the latter country. On the Muir of Blair, an extensive tract of land lying between Blair-Gowrie and Cupar-Angus, there is a community of about twenty-five strawberry-farmers who earn a living for themselves and families at the business of strawberry-growing. The fruit is usually sold *en masse* to the preservers; and in some years as much as forty-six pounds an acre has been realised by the sale; but the average income from a Scottish strawberry-farm is seldom more than twenty-seven pounds an acre.

Leaving out of view in the meantime any reference to grape-growing or peach-culture, except to say that very large quantities of these fruits are grown at remunerative prices for the London markets, we shall endeavour to give a brief account of what has been accomplished with more hardy fruits. The apples and pears of the five counties already enumerated are chiefly converted into cider and perry, which are cheap and wholesome beverages when carefully prepared. Apple and pear orchards for the growth of cider and perry fruit are not so carefully cultivated as those which are devoted to the production of the finer kinds of these fruits required for dessert or other table uses. The ground is economised as much as possible, and in forming an orchard, the trees are very often planted in the hop-fields; but when the fruit-trees grow so large as to demand greater nutriment, the hop-vines are removed, and the ground at once sown down with grass, which by-and-by affords feeding for sheep and cattle. As a general rule, the formation and planting of an orchard costs twelve or fourteen pounds an acre; the kind of apples preferred for cider being Codlin, Red Cowarne, Cockagee, and French Upright. These are grafted on stocks chiefly raised from seed or from crab or wild-apple stocks. About forty trees on the average are set in each acre of ground, about ten or twelve yards apart, each tree being protected by an inclosure, to save it from being injured by the cattle. The cost of manure, maintenance, and pruning may be put down at about three pounds ten shillings per acre; whilst rents in the counties named run from forty shillings to ten pounds per acre.

Large sums are occasionally obtained for superior eating-apples, such as Ribston, Golden, Orange, and King Pippins, as also for the best varieties of baking-apples. In good apple seasons, from twenty-five to thirty-five pounds per acre have been obtained, and on rare occasions as much as fifty pounds, for the finest dessert fruit; but as a rule the fruit itself does not return more than ten pounds per acre over all the ground. Cider-fruit yields about eight hogsheads per acre, the price ranging from two to three pounds per hogshead, the cider made in Devonshire being esteemed the best in the market. The expense of manufacture must, of course, be deducted from the price quoted; whilst there falls to the credit of the fruit-farmer the grass-feeding for cattle, which is worth a considerable sum per acre every season; so that the profits of fruit-growing in these counties are upon the whole so good that a large number of grain and root growers are taking up orchard-ground; while some capitalists have of late been keeping an eye on the business, with a view to the formation of one or two fruit-farming Companies on a large scale.

Fruit-farmers, however large their profits may be, are not without their troubles; they suffer greatly from the uncertainty of the climate, their hopes of a remunerative crop being occasionally blasted by one night's frost. Their orchards are often attacked by the larvæ of various insects, and by one in particular, which speedily divests the trees of every vestige of their foliage. Happily for the public, the prices of the finer sorts of apples are kept under by the constant importation of large quantities from America, so that English fruit-farmers often enough find that when their crops are at their best they can be undersold by Canadian importers. Thousands of barrels of apples arrive in Liverpool, Glasgow, and London every season from the other side of the Atlantic, the fruit being sold at auction for what it will bring. The prices range from eight to thirty shillings for one hundred and twenty pounds of fruit; or from about three farthings to threepence per pound-weight. Another grievance of the English apple-farmer is, that he is not always sure of obtaining compensation from his landlord in the event of his having to leave his orchard before his trees arrive at maturity. Of late years, in some orchards, the proprietor of the ground has furnished it with the necessary trees, so that they belong to him of right in the event of the tenant leaving. This mode of letting what may be called 'furnished orchards' is a fair way of avoiding any collision of interests, because three or four years must necessarily elapse before the trees attain the full vigour of their fruit-bearing power. In the Agricultural Holdings Act of 1875, the planting of orchards is placed in the scale of first-class improvements, for which the tenant *may* be remunerated by compensation at the hands of his landlord for his outlay; and as a rule, the best landlords when they resume possession of orchard-ground, esteem it a matter of honour to compensate the outgoing tenant, to some extent at least, for what he has done in the way of planting the land with fine fruit-yielding trees.

The plumeries of Worcestershire and the cherry-orchards of Kent may now be noticed. Persons who have had occasion to visit Covent Garden

Market early in the morning must have been struck with the vast quantities of plums and cherries which in the season are daily brought there for sale. The total cherry-crop of England seems to be forwarded to London, whence the fruit, purchased by active buyers, is despatched with railway rapidity to all parts of the kingdom. By assiduous personal inquiry at Covent Garden Market, we endeavoured on a recent occasion to ascertain the extent of the trade in cherries, plums, and other fruits; but with only partial success, as each person engaged in the trade knows the extent of his own business only, and no official statistics are taken of the individual goods coming to market, as in Paris. The salesman whom we interviewed was very civil, and very willing to tell us all he knew about the trade. 'Yes,' said he, 'there are tons upon tons of cherries here every day in the season; and there are tons more come in every day to London that never get this length at all, because they are sent off by railway to Liverpool and a hundred other places, where in some seasons there is such a demand, that they never can get enough. As to the coster-men, they take enormous quantities, which they sell in the streets. In some good seasons, when the fruit is plentiful and, in consequence, cheap, a clever coster will dispose of ten or twelve sieves in no time. The poor people who deal with the fruit-hawkers like to get a big handful, and they think when they can buy twenty or thirty cherries for a penny or twopence, that they have got quite a bargain. In my young days—say forty years ago—cherries could be bought over all London in plentiful seasons at a penny the pound. At that time the provincial demands were not so great as they are now. I cannot figure the quantities of cherries that pass through the hands of us salesmen in a season; but I believe as many are sold for eating in London as would fill the *Great Eastern* steamship!'

Thousands of acres are devoted to cherry-growing in Kent, and the cherry-farmers it is said 'make a good thing of it.' But we fancy there is sometimes more glitter than gold in the business, so much of their success being dependent on sunshine and fine weather. Fruit-farmers say that one bad season in the course of four years affects them materially. The rent of the Kent cherry-orchards varies according as they are favourably situated: some farmers pay five pounds an acre, some pay double that sum; and for very good cherry-land as much as twelve pounds is sometimes exacted. The average of the cherry-rents of Kent may be set down at about seven pounds ten shillings per acre. In addition to the rent, there is the expense of cultivation, which is very considerable—seldom indeed less than ten pounds per acre. There are other charges which vary with the extent of the crop, such as those for picking, packing, and marketing; but in a great number of instances the cherry-grower sells his fruit as it is ripening upon the trees, which frees him from further trouble. There are a set of brokers who purchase the fruit just as they see it upon the trees, and take their chance of making a profit out of it. In some cases the crop is put to auction, in others the sale is effected by private contract. It is the varying fortune of the cherry-farmer that in good seasons his fruit is so plentiful that the price falls to a very low figure;

whilst in bad seasons the fruit is so scarce that the total crop does not sum up to a respectable amount. It has been given out that cherry-farmers occasionally get as much as seventy pounds an acre; but the profit on an average is not perhaps a fourth of that sum, which, when the amount of capital invested in the business is considered and the worry which attends it, is not after all more than a fair return. Plums and greengages are largely grown in Kent, as also damsons, and these form a profitable crop. Sometimes however, a late frost will kill the bloom in a single night and leave the trees barren.

In the vale of Evesham in Worcestershire plum-culture is actively carried on, the bulk of the fruit finding a ready market in the populous midland towns of England. The small white plum known as 'the Pershore' is largely grown, and yields a handsome profit per acre—as much sometimes as a hundred pounds. The expenses of plum-culture are—first, the rent charges, usually about seven pounds ten shillings an acre on the average; second, the cost of culture, which as a rule is about twelve pounds ten shillings per acre; or twenty pounds in all, exclusive of the wages paid for gathering and packing the fruit, which in some cases are paid by the purchaser.

Immense quantities of cherries and plums are imported to this country from various parts of the continent; pears of a particularly fine kind, and other dessert fruits as well, are brought over from France and also from Jersey. California too pays us tribute of this kind; but some of the finer fruits of California, such as the best specimens of the Chaumontelle pear, are sent to St Petersburg. Large quantities of reannets still reach Covent Garden from the orchards of Normandy and other parts of France. The Clyde orchards have lost their fame and their name. Twenty-five years ago, the apples, pears, and plums of Lanarkshire were famous throughout Great Britain and Ireland; now they have no separate quotation in the fruit-markets. We never hear of them in fact, although about five hundred acres of land are laid down in orchards in Scotland, chiefly in Lanarkshire.

Bush-fruits—as gooseberries, currants, and raspberries—are always largely in demand for preserving. There are now a great number of preserving-works in the country, and jams and jellies of every kind can be readily purchased in large or small pots in every town and village of the United Kingdom. We frequently hear complaints from economic housewives about the dearness of berries; but they will never become cheaper, because whenever they fall to a certain figure, they are at once secured in quantity by the preservers. Ladies used, five-and-twenty years ago, to say they would make more jam and jelly than they did were it not for the cost of the sugar; now they complain, and with some reason, of the price of the fruit. There are now fruit-preserving works working on a large scale in nearly every considerable town of England and Scotland; and the trade which was begun in Dundee on a small scale has become a feature of our British commerce. Some of the jam and jelly makers turn out from one to twelve tons a day of the various preserves now on sale, and which are extensively used in the manufacturing districts in place of butter. The fruit-bushes in Kent are largely planted in the plum and damson

grounds, as many as twelve hundred bushes to the acre.

In Cambridgeshire, large quantities of black currants are grown for the London market; whilst the red currants are chiefly raised in Kent and Worcester and Gloucester shires. These fruits require a considerable amount of working. In order to have a thick display of good quality, the land requires to be well manured with old woollen rags of all kinds, and the bushes must be regularly and carefully trimmed to keep them fruitful. An idea of the profit will be obtained if we put down a sum of thirty-five pounds per acre as the return, and deduct about twenty-two pounds ten shillings for the expenses of cultivation and gathering. Raspberries are extensively grown in Cornwall, and are packed in tubs or casks before being sent to market. In Cornwall, the bushes will yield over one and a half tons per acre, and the price obtained is usually about thirty shillings per hundredweight. Strawberries as well as raspas are indigenous to Cornwall, and are successfully cultivated. Near London, on its various sides, extensive tracts of land are devoted to the cultivation of this fine fruit. In the early mornings of June and July, hundreds of men, women, and children may be seen at work gathering the fruit for the London market. In the earlier days of the season, two shillings per pound will be readily given in the West End of London for carefully picked fruit. The second-rate fruit is sold for making jam. As many as ten thousand strawberry plants may be found on an acre of ground; it is three years before the plants begin to be very fruitful, after which they will continue to bear for a period of five or six years. Whilst growing to maturity, various kinds of vegetables are reared on the same ground.

It has been shewn by keen economists that we might easily grow strawberries all the year round; but it should not be forgotten that the greatest dainty may become too common, and that a blank in the supply adds zest to the flavour of the fruit when it again comes into season. We shall never forget the delight of a London musician on a concert-giving tour, who found delicious strawberries in the Aberdeen fruit-market at the end of September. 'They give me new life,' he said. Strawberries are a late crop in some northern parts of Scotland. An acre of strawberries will sometimes yield the splendid return of one hundred pounds! Apropos of the Perthshire strawberry-farms, to which allusion has already been made, it was reported two years ago that one of the growers had been offered over two thousand pounds for his lot of twenty-seven acres just as it stood.

Readers jumping to conclusions from what we have said, must not run away with the idea that fruit-farming is a royal road to wealth. The most successful fruit-farmers are those who have been longest at the business and have devoted to it the greatest amount of attention. There are books we know that teach the art of fortune-making by means of fruit-culture; but these works are not unlike the productions of 'guides' which profess to shew how fortunes can at once be won on the turf; and we are always apt to put the question: 'If it be so easy to make a fortune, where is yours?' There is growing competition in the fruit-trade, and it must be borne in mind

that fruits are tender and of a perishable nature ; so perishable indeed that many tons are in the course of a season wasted and sold for manure, which, as the saying goes, 'makes a sad hole in the profits.' In the preceding remarks we have confined ourselves to our home-grown fruits ; but enormous quantities of grapes, figs, prunes, raisins, and other dried kinds, are imported in the course of a year ; and as for our orange supply, who shall put it in figures ? In 1877, the money value of the oranges and lemons which came to us from the groves of Spain, Portugal, and other places was stated as being £1,549,765. Counting each orange as being of the value of one halfpenny, the number represented is 743,887,200 !

AUNT BARBARA'S PRESENT.

CONCLUSION.

'On my return home I found the sum of twenty-five pounds in the beautiful box. But alas ! subsequent events prevented me applying any part of it to the purpose suggested by my kind friend and benefactress. Martha's illness was now daily becoming more serious, and I suppose I overtaxed my own strength in nursing her, for there were soon two invalids in the house ; and the faithful creature only lived to take my baby boy in her arms and see me out of danger. How I missed her I need not say—she who used to take every household care upon herself, and had been a second mother to little Helena.

'The management of a very delicate infant now entirely devolved on me, and unfortunately I was as inexperienced as ever in domestic duties. George never could understand my preference for the employment I had quitted ; but I knew nothing of the one, and my education had made me feel capable of the other. Poor Martha often regretted during her illness that she had never taught me some of what she called her "poor ways ;" for she said : "These London servants will worry the life out of my poor dear." And so they nearly did. This tried George's temper too ; for he naturally missed Martha's never-failing attention to his particular requirements ; and I became really disheartened at my own failures. The climax was however, at hand in a form quite unforeseen by me. One day when I had been tried to the utmost by what I may call my petty domestic miseries, a very peremptory letter was put into my hands from our landlord, demanding the immediate settlement of his claim for half a year's rent. I knew that my recent confinement and poor Martha's illness had exhausted all my resources ; but I hoped that George might see his way to meet the demand. To my great consternation, he declared he could not ; and that without some help, we should have to break up our home. I tried to comfort him in vain. And I forgot my previous troubles in trying to think of a remedy for this more serious one. George gave way to a despondency which alarmed me. Suddenly the idea of parting with Mrs Dalrymple's present flashed upon my mind. Of course it was with extreme reluctance that I entertained the idea, particularly as George valued the painting very much ; but the circumstances seemed sufficiently urgent to justify the surprise ; so the following morning, after my poor husband had gone to the office more depressed than I had ever yet seen

him, I sent for a cab, and took the casket to the shop from which Lady Davenant purchased it. Within a week I triumphantly presented the sum it had realised to George, at the same time telling him how I had obtained it.

'For a moment he looked relieved and happy ; but suddenly asked me if I had emptied the box before parting with it.

"Certainly," I replied very confidently. "There was scarcely anything in it ; merely a few of my father's old letters."

"Did you," he said still more eagerly, "take out a small piece of folded paper from the secret panel in the lid ?"

"No," I replied. "I never put any paper there. But why do you ask so strangely ?"

"Because," he exclaimed, looking wildly at me, "I put a document of the greatest consequence there for safety. Ah ! wife, you have no idea what mischief you have done !"

'I was lost in amazement. I really thought my husband was losing his senses with his troubles, and implored him to explain himself. At length he informed me that in a recent interview with Mr Kelly that gentleman had warned him to take special care of our marriage certificate, and that he had placed it in the safest receptacle he could think of. I tried to comfort him by suggesting that no doubt the purchaser would be known at the shop to which I had taken it. But on inquiry I found, unfortunately, that they had no clue whatever to their customer.

'When Mr Kelly heard of the loss, he hardly knew which to blame the most ; George for concealing the paper without mentioning it to me ; or me for parting with my property without consulting him.

"I am not married myself, thank God !" he piously remarked ; "but in the course of my professional experience, I have observed that many of the worst troubles of married people are caused by their singular want of confidence in each other."

'His displeasure reached its climax when he was told in reply to his searching inquiries, that two very young ladies had purchased the casket. "Ah then, madam," he exclaimed, turning almost fiercely to me, "then there is indeed little hope. They have probably curled their hair with your marriage-lines long ago."

'I could scarcely refrain from laughing at his vehemence, and ventured to observe that even if they were lost, no one was likely to doubt our marriage.

"What ! another concealment ?"—this time addressing George. "You are very much to blame Mortimer, for not telling her the truth." Then taking my hand, Mr Kelly said kindly : "Do not frighten yourself, my dear girl ; but you must now be told that your father's amiable wife has given him to understand that you are not married. I have written to him to assure him of the fact ; but I have no confidence that he will see my letter, as I regret to say he is very ill, and Mrs Wyndham no doubt can intercept any she does not wish him to read."

"Why," I asked, trembling from head to foot, "does she wish my father to think me so wicked ?"

"My poor girl," replied Mr Kelly, "do you not see that by traducing you, she may induce him to leave every shilling of his property to her son ?"

"I do not care for the property," I passionately exclaimed; "but I will see my father myself, to convince him of the truth, if I walk every step of the way." Then I angrily told George that I should never forgive him, if my father died in the belief of my unworthiness; and insisted upon going to Rosemere immediately.

'Mr Kelly had some difficulty in persuading me of the futility of such a step, and tried to console me by proposing his own plan. He had, he said, fully intended going himself to Rosemere to take the certificate, not daring to trust it to a letter, when he heard of my father's illness. "Now, I can still, I hope, carry out my intention, so far as seeing him. In a few days, my dear, he shall know all."

'Sorrowfully we left Mr Kelly's office, I counting the hours to the time he had named, and thinking how slowly they would pass. But I was not destined to wait so long. The very next day Mr Kelly was summoned to Rosemere, my father having become suddenly worse. Always prompt, his friend and solicitor lost no time on this occasion, as the letter written by our family doctor described his patient's state as—most critical.'

Mrs Mortimer's emotion was at this point of her narrative so evident, that her considerate auditors begged her to defer the sequel to another opportunity, and for the rest of the evening they tried to cheer her by every means in their power.

The whole story was afterwards written by Dora for 'Aunt Barbara,' and may be repeated here in her words from the point at which Mrs Mortimer seemed unable to proceed.

On Mr Kelly's arrival at Rosemere he was ushered at once into the invalid's room. Mr Wyndham had been seized with paralysis, and was fearfully altered, though perfectly sensible, and a look of indescribable relief passed over his countenance at the sight of the lawyer. Mrs Wyndham, on the contrary, could hardly conceal her annoyance, and received him with the utmost coldness. But her husband at once requested her to leave the room; and as the doctor was about to follow, asked him to remain, as he felt unequal himself to explain his wishes. Upon this, the good doctor, delicately avoiding names, stated that in consequence of very painful information which had reached Mr Wyndham, he had unfortunately been induced to disinherit his daughter; but having since had reason to doubt its accuracy, he wished the necessary steps to be immediately taken to secure to her the provision originally intended for her. Mr Kelly then heard that a will had been prepared by a friend of Mrs Wyndham's; and suggested a codicil to be added, as the readiest way of carrying out the dying father's wishes.

A restorative having been administered by the doctor, the sufferer in broken accents made known his intentions. First, he left his daughter his entire forgiveness, as he hoped for forgiveness from her and from his Maker; and on the production of 'legal proof' of her marriage within three months of his decease, she was to be entitled to receive twenty thousand pounds. Mr Kelly would have made an objection to the words 'legal proof;' but a significant glance from the doctor warned him to hasten to the completion of his task. Even then they thought all was lost, as Mr Wyndham

was sinking fast, and made many ineffectual attempts to attach his signature to this important document. When at length he had accomplished it, his trembling fingers pointed to the words to which Mr Kelly had objected. 'Not for my own satisfaction,' he gasped. 'I am convinced; but—for—others. The cruel slander—has spread far—and wide. My poor Helena's fame must be cleared—the world—God forgive—the person who deceived'— He could say no more.

When Mrs Wyndham was recalled to the room, she returned leading her little son. The dying man was much affected at the sight of this child of his fondest hopes, but passed away without noticing the presence of his wife.

When all was over, Mr Kelly asked the doctor by what means the happy change towards his daughter had been effected.

'Your own letter was the cause,' he replied. 'I happened to be present when it arrived, and being on my way to my patient's room, offered to convey it to him. Mrs Wyndham had no excuse to offer for retaining it; and it was fortunate I had done so, as he much required my professional care for some hours after reading it.'

A few hours later, Mr Kelly returned to town, and lost no time in acquainting Mrs Mortimer with her father's death, feeling very thankful that he had some comfort to convey to her with the melancholy intelligence.

The following week Mr Kelly again went to Rosemere to attend his friend's funeral and read the will; his one hope with regard to Helena's interest being that Mrs Wyndham would not insist upon the production of legal proof of a marriage which she was well convinced had taken place. But this vindictive woman, probably instigated by her own solicitor, would not sanction the payment of Mrs Mortimer's legacy until the terms of the bequest were literally complied with.

The suspense of the next three months was trying beyond description to the young couple. Advertisements for the recovery of the lost certificate—a course which Mr Kelly had hitherto avoided—were now inserted in the leading papers; yet it was only when the stipulated time had nearly expired that the last attracted notice.

It may be imagined from the great interest and anxiety felt by Mr Kelly for his very interesting client, with what pleasure he brought her affairs to a successful issue.

'We have since been introduced to this dear friend of the Mortimers,' added Dora to Aunt Barbara, 'and he says that Mrs Wyndham is the only discontented person at Rosemere. The foolish woman laments over her son as if he had been robbed of his inheritance, though the young gentleman succeeds to an estate of ten thousand a year.'

A year later, Mrs Wyndham had indeed real cause for grief. The young heir of Rosemere, always a delicate child, was lying beside his father in the family mausoleum. The bereaved mother resisted all Helena's efforts to console her, and coldly refused her cordial invitation to remain at the Hall. She declared that she could no longer endure the place, and that she should live abroad for the rest of her miserable life.

Events have thus brought Helena back to the home of her childhood, now her own property.

She is a thoroughly happy wife and mother, a benefactress to the poor, and an admirable hostess, as her friends the Forresters and Davenants can testify; for they have all met at her hospitable mansion, and the families have promised to exchange visits every year.

Lady Davenant and Mrs Mortimer have had one dispute—it related to the jewel casket which was the first cause of their friendship. Each declared that the other had the greater claim to it. At length Helena conquered, insisting that her friend would no doubt give serious offence by parting with Aunt Barbara's Present.

NEARLY BURIED ALIVE.

SECOND ARTICLE.

In this *Journal* for October 1878, under the heading 'Nearly Buried Alive,' are narrated two or three instances of narrow escapes from interment before the proper time, and which occurred on the continent. 'Such occurrences,' says a correspondent to whom we are indebted for the following experiences, 'are by no means unknown in this country, even though burial seldom follows closely upon death; for in my limited circle in a comparatively obscure country town, I have met with several such, and I doubt not that other cases could be adduced which should at least teach that special care should be taken to prove that the supposed corpse is really dead.'

'The following account was given me by the son of a lady, who was within a few hours of being consigned to the grave, upon the supposition that she was dead. This lady, the wife of a captain in the royal navy, and in the middle of life, had for a considerable time been a source of great anxiety to her husband and family from failing health, and the household had removed from the neighbourhood of London into a notably salubrious part of Devonshire, hoping that a milder climate would have a beneficial effect upon the invalid. Their hopes were however, disappointed, as no improvement in the health of the patient took place; and both husband and family felt that in a very short time their house would be invaded by death, and they would have to mourn the loss of the beloved one. The decline of the patient was gradual in the extreme: one stage of weakness after another was reached, till at last the apparent transition came, and Mrs —, to all appearance, died. It was midwinter when this happened, the weather very cold; and as the house occupied by the family was remote from some of the friends and relatives who were invited to attend the funeral, which was to take place about a week after the supposed death, these were requested, or found it necessary to reach Captain —'s residence the evening before the day appointed for the interment of the lady. Having reached the house of mourning, they adjourned to the chamber of death, and gazed upon the lifeless form of her whom they had so long revered and loved.

'Dinner was served, and a sad doleful meal it was. As usual they went to the drawing-room after dinner, the bereaved father and husband accompanying them, and there they occupied themselves in recalling the various traits and excellencies of the departed. Whilst engaged in this manner, the room door was violently opened, and

the footman, apparently as horror-stricken as man could be, entered, exclaiming: "If you please sir, Missus' ghost is walking!"

'Captain — immediately left the room, taking the footman, very much against his will, with him. Shutting the door, and enjoining the occupants not to follow him, as he would be back quickly, he at once crossed the hall and ascended the stairs, with the intention of going to the room where his deceased wife, as he supposed, was lying in her coffin; but on turning into the corridor or passage at the top of the stairs, his courage was severely tested, for in his way there stood a figure clad in the habiliments of the grave; yet although much startled, he was equal to the occasion, and addressing the figure, said: "God bless me, Mary" [his wife's name], "what are you doing here?"

'His wife—for it was his wife, and no ghost—answered very faintly: "Oh, take me to the fire. I am frozen."

'He immediately got a blanket, wrapped it around her, and to the consternation of the servants, took her into the kitchen, where there was a large fire burning; and soon with warmth, assisted by a very sparing administration of warm liquid, vital heat was restored.

'When Captain — returned to the drawing-room, it must be supposed he found the company in a great state of excitement, which was not at all diminished by his statement of what had happened; and nothing but an interview with the supposed deceased lady would convince them that they had not a very few hours before seen her actually a corpse. And she, strange to say, despite the shock caused by her finding herself where she was and arrayed for the grave (for she was conscious of having clambered out of the coffin), and the full narration of particulars by her husband, and the consequent knowledge of the very narrow escape from premature burial she had experienced—she very quickly recovered much of her lost health and strength, and lived on several years before she really died.

'It is scarcely necessary to add that the mourning friends were soon changed into joyful ones, and that the attendance of the undertaker, with his funeral appliances, was dispensed with.

'I was not told what was the opinion of the medical attendant upon this extraordinary occurrence; but as the son of the lady who, as I stated before, told me of the circumstance, is now in England, and I hope to see him, I intend to take the opportunity of making full inquiries on this head. I may add that the mention of the matter was most repugnant to the lady in question, and any allusion to it was carefully checked by every member of the family.

'The preceding account was narrated to me as I have described, after I had been telling my friend of the case which I now proceed to state, and as corroborative of the opinion I then expressed to him that many persons were really buried alive. This occurrence, the subject of which approached a step nearer the grave than the one just recited, happened to a man whom I well know, and who was in business for several years in the town in which I reside; after which he left my neighbourhood, and took a business in a town in the west of England, and for some months I heard nothing concerning him—in fact he had passed from my mind. But I chanced to be spending my annual

holiday on the South Devon coast, and one day had arranged to proceed to Dartmouth, in order to go up the Dart to Totness and view, as I have done several times before, the beautiful scenery which opens up to the traveller as he journeys the whole of the way between the two before-named places.

‘Having accomplished so much of the programme marked out, I determined to return to my seaside lodgings by the railway instead of going over the same course I had travelled in the morning; and to do this I went to the Totness station of the South Devon line, and whilst waiting there for a train to take me to my destination, the down-train from London arrived; and upon looking across the line, I recognised as one of the passengers, as the train drew up, a lady from my own town, and who when at home lived exactly opposite to me. She was an intimate friend of the wife of the person to whom I have alluded. I went to the back of the train, crossed the line on to the other platform, and introduced myself to the lady, of course remarking how strange it was that two neighbours, without any arrangement for the purpose, should meet two hundred miles away from their respective homes. She told me the occasion of her taking this long journey was a painful one, and that she was going to the house of her friend Mrs —, the wife of our late fellow-townsmen. He was very seriously ill; and his wife, her friend, had written that she was nearly exhausted by anxiety and the fatigues of nursing, and that she, my neighbour, was proceeding to assist as well as she could by her presence and help in the sick household. This was the explanation of our meeting so long a distance from home.

‘The train moved on; and I heard nothing more of any of the persons alluded to until I reached my own home at the expiration of my holiday, when upon inquiry I found that Mr — was still very ill, that indeed there was no reasonable hope of his recovery, and that in all probability a few days must bring about a conclusion of the matter by the death of the sufferer. I then for a week or two lost sight of the circumstance, having business calls away from home to attend to; but upon my second return I saw the father of the lady whom I had met in the train at Totness, and who had so generously gone to help her friend in her trouble; and upon asking him what news of Mr —, he told me his daughter was still there, and that Mr —, although still alive and fast recovering his usual health, had to all appearance died; that a coffin was made, and the supposed corpse placed in it; and that upon the arrival of the day appointed for the funeral, and at the time for making the latest preparations for removing the bier, the undertaker’s man proceeded to screw the lid upon the coffin, when to the great consternation of the workman he saw the body move and attempt to turn over. After his first fright, the man saw that he was in the presence of life and not death, and rendered what assistance was necessary to enable the prisoner to escape from his very perilous position. The supposed dead man gradually recovered consciousness; but his surprise and horror were great, as he was fully sensible before the habiliments of death could be removed from his person.

‘The crisis being past, comparative health and

strength soon came; and much to the joy of wife and friends, he was able to again enter into active life and its concerns. Since the event just described, Mr — has thoroughly recovered, but has no remembrance whatever of the intervening days between his supposed death and resuscitation.

[The practical application of the foregoing cases is that every one should learn to know how to distinguish actual from supposed death; and that where in certain cases there lingers doubt as to the final release from life, the apparently dead should have the benefit of the doubt. The following are the chief signs of actual death.

The arrest of the pulse and the stoppage of breathing. No movement of the chest—no moist breath to dim a looking-glass placed before the mouth. These stoppages of pulse and breath may however, under certain conditions be reduced to so low an ebb, that it is by no means easy to decide whether or not they are completely annihilated. Cases too have been known in which the patient had the power of voluntarily suspending these functions for a considerable time. The loss of irritability in the muscles (a fact which may be readily ascertained by a galvanic current) is a sign of still greater importance than even the apparent stoppage of the heart or of the breath.

The contractile power of the skin is also lost after death. When a cut is made through the skin of a dead body, the edges of the wound close, while a similar cut made during life presents an open or gaping appearance.

An important change termed the *rigor mortis* takes place after death, at varying periods. The pliability of the body ceases, and a general stiffness ensues. This change may appear within half-an-hour, or it may be delayed for twenty or thirty hours, according to the nature of the disease. It must however, be borne in mind that *rigor mortis* is not a continuous condition; it lasts for twenty-four to thirty-six hours, and then passes away. It commences in the head and trunk, and then in the lower extremities, and disappears in the same order.

One of the most important of the various changes that indicate death is the altered colour of the surface of the body. Livid spots of various sizes occur from local congestions during life; but the appearance of a green tint on the skin of the abdomen, accompanied by a separation of the cuticle or skin, is a certain sign that life is extinct. To these symptoms may be added the half-closed eyelids and dilated pupils; and the half-closed fingers. These facts, which we have gleaned from the best authorities, may perhaps be at some time or other of practical use to our readers.—Ed.]

IRISH TRAITS.

BLACKROCK CASTLE—AN OLD SAILOR’S YARN.

THERE are not many now extant who remember the old castle of Blackrock, near Cork; and few doubtless who do so with the same tender and pleasant associations as myself—the home of early days being within a stone’s-throw of the edifice. A curious-looking building it was, standing on the site of the present Blackrock Castle, its modern successor; the rocky promontory on which it was built jutting out where the Lee—that loveliest of

river—makes a bend in its course ; looking up towards Cork on the one side, and on the other commanding a view down the river and around, the like of which for beauty of scenery it would be hard to match.

The castle itself was a round tower, with a circular chamber at top having large windows all round it, which had served to all appearance, as a lighthouse in the olden time ; and the roof was a dome-shaped cupola of lead, surmounted by a large ball. It was rather quaint-looking than picturesque, though the graceful pencil of Crofton Croker, to whom the old castle, standing within view of his birthplace, was a dear and familiar object, contrived to render it with charming fidelity. In the first edition of his *Fairy Legends*, upon the page bearing the lines dedicating the book to Lady Chatterton, there was an exquisite vignette of the old castle, from an etching by himself. Pleasant it was on a summer's day, sheltered from the sun by the projecting shadow of the lofty tower, to sit among the rocks at its base and watch the vessels as they appeared rounding the promontory. The channel was so near the castle and so deep, that they passed quite close to it. The trim pleasure-boat, and yacht with snow-white sails ; the stately brig ; the Portuguese schooner with its curious sloping masts ; the collier clumsily built and grimy ; the picturesque lighter, its sails deep red and glowing in the sun. And anon, all bustle, noise, and foam, would come the steamer, lashing the waves with busy paddles, and panting off on its tumultuous course, leaving far behind a heaving track of yeasty water.

There was a sort of quiet excitement, so to speak, in watching for the ships while lazily lying among the rocks ; the castle preventing their approach from being seen until they suddenly appeared so close as to seem almost within reach of arm and voice. And then, when the tide was making, how soothing was the measured musical plash of the little waves as they came lap-lap over the stones in fairy circles ; stealing in with gentle murmuring sound and almost imperceptible advance.

In the early mornings, when the fishing-craft were astir, the scene was a busy one. A boat with two men in it, one to row, the other to pay out the salmon-net piled up in the stern, would put out. A semicircle would be described by the rower, his comrade vigorously flinging out the net. Then would begin the hauling-in by the fishermen, in tucked-up trousers and bare legs, stationed on the beach at each end of the semicircle. How anxiously they pulled, and how excited the groups of women and lads, looking on with creels and baskets, ready to receive the prize ! What exultation and what bustle when a fine haul of fish—splendid silvery salmon leaping in the nets—gladdened their expectant eyes ; and how blank the disappointment if nothing were taken, and women and boys had to shoulder their baskets and march in dudgeon home ! Sometimes if their husbands were fishing elsewhere, a passing boat would be hailed by the basket-women standing at the castle steps. It would put in to the little creek, a bargain be struck, and a pile of just-caught sprats be showered from it on the beach.

One of the rooms in the lower part of the tower was tenanted by an old crone, who would certainly have been burned for a witch had she lived in earlier times. Not that there was anything malevolent or witch-like in her face, which must have once been comely ; but her habits were strange and mysterious, and she was regarded with superstitious awe as something weird and uncanny. She spoke to no one, and would sit for days, and sometimes nights, motionless on a rock, looking down into the water. There was a talk of some tragedy in her early life connected with the river ; of all she loved having been swallowed up in its depths, their boat going down before her eyes. But the popular belief was that her real self had been carried off by the fairies in her youth, and this strange silent being left in her place. On stormy nights or in rough weather, when the waves were dashing up wildly against the tower, she never would remain inside, but might be seen on her accustomed rock, the red handkerchief—her usual head-covering—blown back, and her long gray hair streaming in the wind. Age and exposure to the elements had made her face a network of wrinkles, and the colour of a walnut shell. She would have been a grand model for a Herkomer, whose genius, leaving youth and freshness to other pencils, elects to depict humanity in its sere decay. This strange woman lived to be nearly a hundred years old, and the night she died Blackrock Castle was burned to the ground !

The wake was an orgie surpassing what will often take place when, as in the present instance, death has caused neither grief nor sympathy, and there are no feelings to be hurt by untimely mirth. It would have been rank heresy to insinuate that some spark unnoticed during the drinking, smoking, dancing, flirting, and general revelry, had caused the catastrophe ; the deed was of course attributed to the fairies. As long as 'one of their own' was its inhabitant, the 'good people' protected the place ; but they could not suffer it to become, after her, the dwelling of an ordinary mortal ; so destroyed the castle to prevent its being thus desecrated.

The scene of the conflagration was one to be remembered by those who, like myself, witnessed it. Glanmire and the opposite banks of the river lit up by the burning glow, which brought out in strong relief villas and trees and every object along the shore. The roar of the flames, leaping fiercely upwards, their crimson glare reflected blood-like in the dancing waves and on the excited up-turned faces of the crowds surging inside the castle-yard. The rescued coffin, with its silent tenant, laid on the turf, awe-stricken groups surrounding it. The crash of falling timbers, and every now and then a shower of molten lead from the cupola plashing down and plunging with angry hiss into the waters.

Among the dismayed lookers-on at the destruction of the time-honoured building was an old sailor who loved Blackrock Castle well ; a native of the village, who had come to end his days in the place that gave him birth. He was a bit of a character in his way, full of wise saws and stories of adventures that had happened during his voyages ; and these yarns he loved to tell as he leaned over the low wall of the castle-yard, or lounged about among the rocks and fishing-boats on the beach, where every day he was to be found.

Many of his stories live in my memory still, and one I will repeat now as nearly as possible in his own words.

'Twas in the last voyage I ever made before coming to lay up my old bones ashore for good, that what I am going to tell your honours happened. *Nancy* our ship was called, hailing from Cork, bound for Van Diemen's Land; and we were lying in the Mersey, waiting for our passengers. The captain was short of hands, and we got two or three aboard before we sailed. Among them was a young fellow who gave his name as Bruce; nigh upon twenty-four years of age or thereabouts, seemingly. He shipped as an ordinary seaman; but it was easy to see there was a difference betune himself and the others, from the talk and the ways of him. A fine-looking young fellow too as eyes could wish to see; tall and broad-shouldered. Well, your honours, we weren't very long after leaving port, and the *Nancy* getting well out to sea, when there was the world's commotion on board. And what was it but a poor little stowaway they had discovered crouched up hiding under the fore-hatch, and were hauling out to bring him to the captain. A bit of a chap he was, with rings of golden hair curling all round his head, a purty oval face, an' the great large blue eyes lifted up pitiful an' swimming in tears; for he was frightened out of his seven senses, the crature, when he was caught, and the rough fellows pulling at him. Before you could turn about Bruce was alongside; and "Boys," sez he, "lave go of the child; there's no harm in him. Don't drag him. I know who he is, and will make it straight with the captain."

'A bright handy little fellow he was; active as a bee, and willing an' ready to do any odd job that turned up on board. The men would have liked nothing better than to make a pet and a play-toy of him; but he was as shy as a bird, and made no freedom with any one, keeping himself to himself. The captain took to the young un wonderful. He was a family man, you see, with a wife and childer in the Cove of Cork; and he'd have little George in his cabin painting, and colouring picters and such-like. The boy could do 'em beautiful! Helping the steward was what they kep him to chiefly; but for rough work on deck, or anything o' that kind, he was too tendther entirely. 'Twasn't fit for the donny little white hands of him, bless you! Bruce, it seems, had known the lad afore, and used to have an eye on him constant, to see he got good treatment; not that many on board the *Nancy* would have harmed little George. One day a big surly brute of a boy we had in the ship told him to do something that was beyond his strength, and was going to kick him because he wasn't able. Bruce, who was never very far off somehow, rushed at the fellow, his face afire with rage. "You cowardly rascal," he cried, grabbing him by the collar and shaking him till you'd think the teeth would be shook out of his head, "you offer to do that again—you dare to lay a finger on that child—and I'll break every bone in your body." There were a good many jeers among the men at the way Bruce watched and spied after his "little brother," as they nicknamed him; but they said nought to his face. There was something about the young man that made folks keep their distance. 'Twasn't for any likeness betune 'em they

were called "brothers." The young one was as fair as a lily and bright and smiling; with hair that, when the sun was upon it, looked for all the world like shining gold; and Bruce was dark-complexioned, with black locks and a grave countenance.

'The voyage was a fair one. Nothing to make a remark upon till it was well nigh over; and then a sudden squall came on. Ugly customers they are, them squalls; and you're never safe from them in those latitudes. They'll spring up upon you so suddent and with such violence, that if you're not as quick as thought, "Davy's locker" would be the word for the ship and every soul aboard. In a minute all hands were turned up, and orders sung out to shorten sail. It was no end of a hurry. In less than no time the royals and top-gallant sails were furled, and a reef taken in the topsails; every man at his best along the yards. Little George—always ready to help—jumped into the fore-rigging to get aloft and stow the fore-royal. Bruce was after him like a shot. Too late! Whether the child missed his footing or got giddy, none could know; down he fell, on to the deck. There wasn't stir or sound—his neck was broken!

Here the old man paused and took off his hat. Extracting from it a cotton handkerchief rolled in a wisp inside, he passed it across his brow as before he resumed his story.

'I'm an aged man, your honours, and I've seen, I daresay, as much trouble an' grief an' heart-scauld as any one else in this sorrowful world; but never, before or since, did I meet the equal of Bruce's despair when he seen the "little brother" lying dead forenent him. He flung himself down on the deck, convulsed-like with agony; and when he come to, he wound his arms about the corpse, and keeping every one off, and not letting man or mortal touch it but himself, lifted it up and staggered off like one that was drunk.

'And then it all came out. Little George was Bruce's wife. They had known each other from childhood, and had been promised to one another and hand-fasted from since they were boy and girl. Both belonged to the best of families; and the parents and friends on all sides were agreeable to the marriage; but the young man's father got into money troubles by reason of a bank that broke; and her people seeing he had no means of supporting her, wouldn't hear of their marrying. All was forbid betune them, and they were parted from one another. But they couldn't live asunder; so, like a pair of young fools, as they were—God help 'em!—they ran away and got spliced unknown. Bruce, as I call him still—though that wasn't his right name—thought if they could only get to Van Diemen's Land, he'd easy make out a living there for the both of them; and she too with such good hands for picter-drawing and the like. So they came in the manner I've told you aboard of the *Nancy*; for there was no other way they could sail together, not having a penny in the world. The young man had their marriage lines, which he shewed the captain; and her weddin' ring, that she wore round her neck, the crature! tied with a blue ribbon. And he had papers and letters and docyments proving the birth and station of him and herself, and the grand folks they come of. He was twenty-three years of age, he said; and

she coming up for eighteen; though you'd never think but what she was much younger than that, by reason of being so fair and innocent-looking, and seeming small and slender in boy's clothes.

'It was a sorrowful sight when, the day after the accident, the remains of the poor young thing were brought on deck sewed up in a hammock; and we were all gathered round to hear the funeral service read over them. There wasn't one of the crew that wasn't grieved to the heart for our little comrade that had made the voyage with us, and brightened up the old ship with purty ways—blithesome as a robin and sperrity. Even the big lubberly boy, that no one thought had a soft spot about him, was crying like rain, skulked behind the rest; and there was moisture in the eyes of many a rough old salt, and brown hands brushed across them.

'But never a tear, good or bad, did Bruce shed. He stood beside the corpse, the living image of despair, with gray haggard face and parched lips; his eyes wild and bloodshot, with a kind of stony glare in them that wasn't natural. We none of us liked his looks. The captain took hold of him by the sleeve and spoke some pitiful words, trying to rouse him a bit; but lord! you might as well talk to the dead in their graves. He didn't hear or notice anything.

'At last the part of the service was come to when the remains are slipped off into the sea; and at that he gave a great start; and setting his teeth, with one leap he was over the side, reaching the water a'most as soon as the corpse. Down to the bottom they sank both together—the living and the dead—and disappeared! God pardon him, poor fellow! he didn't know what he was doing.

'Yes, your honours, twas a sad occurrence; but there's an old saying, that no good comes of going again' the will of them that reared us. It brings, sure enough, neither luck nor grace.'

ISANDŪLA!

Oh, Isandūla! ever mournful name!
At once our glory and our lasting shame;
For where thy rugged hills o'ershade the plain—
By thy dark warriors pitilessly slain—
Nine hundred Britons for their country bled,
To helpless slaughter by some blunder led!
For this our tearful cheeks should blush in shame,
O'er the dimmed 'scutcheon of our tarnished fame;
For this the fire should flash from out our eyes,
Our bosoms heave, upborne by 'vengeful sighs.

Yet while our hearts deplore their hapless doom,
A glorious halo rises through the gloom—
Gilding our sorrow with its gen'rous light—
For ev'ry soldier in that fearful fight,
Whose bravery redeems a blund'ring crime,
Stands out a hero to the end of time!

Oh, mourn, ye mothers! tender maidens, weep!
For those who 'neath that rocky mountain sleep,
Where Britain's sons in all their manly pride,
For you, for us, for Britain's glory died!
Where noble Youth and humbler Manhood stood,
And sealed their patriotism with their blood.
Where Smith his silent cannon spiked and fell,
With Palleine, Durnford, in that wild pell-mell;
Where Coghill, Melvill, their loved colours bore
Till Death o'ertook them on Tugela's shore!

Dark was that day, though Afric's burning sun
Beamed fiercely where the bloody deed was done.
With lightsome hearts, too careless of their fate,
With cheerful eye and bosoms all elate,
On went those Britons in their serried rows,
With high contempt to seek their dusky foes.
With martial fire each eager bosom burns,
And tame precaution each disdainful, spurns!
Now with swift suddenness, from right, from left,
From o'er the hills, from ev'ry rocky cleft—
In countless hordes—the dusky warriors swarm,
Each with his spear and shield upon his arm.
No shout of triumph rends the startled air,
But stealthy as a tiger from his lair—
And just as pitiless—on, on, they sweep,
In silence dread and ominously deep!

Now sound the trumpets with their loud alarms,
And leaden hail pours forth from British arms!
Each murd'rous volley breaks that living wall,
A hundred Zulus at each volley fall!
Yet as their comrades drop, the savage foes
Step o'er the dying, and their ranks re-close;
And still they come, like locusts o'er the plain,
And gun and rifle mow their ranks in vain.

What could they do, each gallant British son,
By savages outnumbered twelve to one?
What could they do, but as they did—right well—
And precious English lives right dearly sell?
Giants not Britons, now could only boast
The dire defeat of that exhaustless host!
Not Englishmen, but demi-gods were meet
To cause those countless myriads retreat!

Now with a cry the smoky air is rent,
An awful cry—'The ammunition's spent!'
Yet on, those legions swarm—on ev'ry hand
They fall o'erwhelming on that fated band.
With bayonets fixed, Britannia's sons engage
Those barb'rous hosts with patriotic rage,
In fierce contention, and with murd'rous toil,
Disputing inch by inch th' ensanguined soil;
Hurling them back like rock-besattered waves,
But still the fight with new-born vigour raves,
For like the ocean, with redoubled force,
They still advance upon their fateful course.

Now faint and weary wax those British hearts,
And weakly ward the ever-show'ring darts.
The foe increasing, mingling hand to hand,
In one broad belt inclose the sinking band!
Now with huge strength they hurl their slaughtered
friends,
As ghastly missiles on our bayonet-ends!
Then closing round their thus encumbered foes,
They aim their weapons, and direct their blows!
See in one mass, in dire confusion blent,
Briton and Zulu!—while the air is rent
With horrid sounds, as with discordant cries
A conqueror triumphs, or the vanquished dies!
But now the end is near. From ev'ry side
The foemen surge—an e'er increasing tide—
Like Titans fight the now exhausted few;
What courage can—those fainting Britons do.
Till pressed by 'whelming numbers on each hand,
Each hero sinks upon the blood-stained sand;
Then—as the foe regains his frowning hills,
And Dingan's song the dark'ning welkin fills—
Breathes out his life beneath the crimson sun,
And Isandūla's massacre is done!

HARDING LAWRENCE.

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